



**EPA Awards Rensselaerville \$867,000 for  
Lower Rio Grande Valley S.T.E.P. Self-Help Wastewater Demonstration Projects**

PRESS RELEASE  
February 26, 2004

The Rensselaerville Institute, a not-for-profit organization that invests in Community Sparkplugs to pioneer self-help, community-building initiatives, announces receipt of nearly one million dollars to demonstrate innovative wastewater treatment and reuse at a 6:00 pm meeting in Penitas, Texas tonight, February 26.

The grant, awarded by EPA as part of its National Community Decentralized Wastewater Management Program (NCDWMP), will demonstrate the benefits of treating and reusing wastewater as opposed to traditional collection and disposal, particularly in colonias settings, and where opportunities for beneficial reuse of the treated effluent exist.

Both conditions are present in Penitas, the first U.S. settlement in the Lower Rio Grande Valley. Subdivided and populated previous to creation of the model subdivision rules, few Penitas homes are in compliance with current sanitation requirements. Recently announced funding from Texas Parks and Wildlife Department to develop a birding attraction add yet more fuel to the fire that is growing among residents to create sewage service.

The meeting of concerned residents, called by former City Manager Efren Garza, provides an opportunity for The Rensselaerville Institute to lead a discussion on how the respective needs for sewage service at Old Penitas and the new birding center can be resolved through the EPA's NCDWMP grant.

Place: Sara's Soup 'n Salad  
FM 1427 (East side); just south of Hiway 83  
Time: 6:00 p.m.

For more information call Efren Garza, 458-1628